



Westinghouse News

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For Immediate Release

WIPP Instructors to Provide Specialized Training For Louisiana Emergency Response Professionals

CARLSBAD, N.M., January 15, 2001 – Trainers from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) will be in Louisiana January 16-19 to teach emergency response professionals what to do should they arrive at an accident involving a WIPP shipment.

Transuranic radioactive waste shipments from DOE's Savannah River Site near Aiken, S.C. to WIPP are scheduled to begin this year. Trucks coming from Aiken will follow Interstate 20 through Louisiana.

Classes will be held January 16 in Bossier Parish at the Shreveport Fire Academy, January 17 in Webster Parish at the old Sibley High School, January 18 at the Oachita Parish Fire Department, and January 19 at the Rayville Civic Center. The eight-hour course will run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at each location.

Instructors will teach the First Responder course, providing emergency responders from state and local jurisdictions with the tools needed to protect themselves, the public and the environment in the unlikely event of a transportation accident involving a shipment headed for WIPP. First responders are individuals who arrive first at scenes of accidents. They include law enforcement personnel, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and tow truck operators.

This course, offered through the DOE Carlsbad Area Office States and Tribal Education Program (STEP), is taught by instructors from the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division, the management and operating contractor for DOE at WIPP.

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Students are instructed in material identification, regulations, response procedures and personal protection. As part of the training, students will also see, firsthand, the truck and shipping containers (Transuranic Package Transporter, Model 2 or TRUPACT-II) that are used for actual WIPP shipments.

Since the inception of STEP in 1988, DOE has trained more than 17,000 emergency response personnel in 20 states. In 1993, 1997 and 2000, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration reviewed and concurred with all STEP courses. STEP courses include Train-The-Trainer, First Responder, First Responder Refresher, Command and Control, Incident Command System and Radiological Instrumentation Orientation.

WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is designed to permanently dispose of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation 2,150 feet (almost one-half mile) underground. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP March 26, 1999.

Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

For more information about WIPP, call 1-800-336-9477, or visit the WIPP Web site at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.